

Supplemental Information

This project provides the opportunity to enhance experiences and conservation within two Congressionally designated areas at key recreation locations on lakeshores within tributaries to arguably the two most important River Systems in California, the Sacramento and the Klamath. The Shasta-Trinity is actively involved in a programmatic effort to consolidate fragmented land ownership on the Forest, particularly in Congressionally designated areas. These two parcels represent the second and third highest priority for acquisition on the Forest. Past efforts to acquire them through exchange or purchase have failed. Involvement of the Trust for Public Lands opens a new opportunity to acquire these properties that have a high risk of subdivision and development.

Castle Lake Parcel – Shoreline and Wilderness – Castle Lake presents a rare opportunity for visitors to find a beautiful and classic alpine lake at the end of a year-round paved road, only about nine miles from Interstate 5. The view is spectacular of granitic cliffs dotted with gnarly pine trees, and the location is among the most popular destinations in the Mt. Shasta area, receiving heavy year-round use. Castle Lake is startlingly clear and so similar an ecosystem to Lake Tahoe that the University of California has established a research camp on the National Forest part of the shoreline, and the studies here are used as a benchmark for not only Lake Tahoe, but mountain lakes throughout the world. This lake is the longest continuously monitored mountain lake ecosystem in the western hemisphere and hundreds of scientific research projects and theses have been conducted here. Data collected at Castle Lake serves as the undeveloped lake ecosystem “control” for monitoring changes brought on by development elsewhere. Six-hundred and thirty-seven acres of this incredible location is in private ownership, over half of which is within the Castle Crags Wilderness. Acquisition would allow legal public access (where none currently exists) to parts of Castle Lake itself, Little Castle Lake and the trail to Heart Lake, and on to the Castle Crags Wilderness and the Pacific Crest trail.

Stoney Creek Parcel – Shoreline and National Recreation Area – The Stoney Creek Parcel creates a hole in the Trinity Unit of the Shasta-Trinity National Recreation Area within Northwest Forest Plan identified Late Successional Reserve (LSR) habitat, and key National Forest recreation facilities and Trinity Lake on the south. Primed for development, the owners have already completed the survey work for subdivision, and completed most of the requirements needed to gain building approval. Subdivision would lead to creation of a block of highly developable land within LSR and directly adjacent to campgrounds, along Stoney Creek, and in between Trinity Lake and the Trinity Alps Wilderness farther upstream. The possibility of acquisition presents an opportunity to preserve the high quality visual character of this key recreation area while preventing inevitable use conflicts, encroachments, lakeshore degradation and LSR habitat fragmentation.

SLARS Criteria:

1) Healthy Watersheds -

- Castle Lake Parcel - Consolidates public ownership in the Castle Lake basin/ Castle Lake Creek headwaters and Ney Springs Creek headwaters. Trail maintenance and reconstruction, and campsite rehabilitation would decrease ongoing impacts. Both watersheds are critical areas. Castle Lake is home to an important lake ecology research station and Ney Spring Creek is an important tributary to the Upper Sacramento trophy trout (catch and release) fishery.
- Stoney Creek Parcel – Consolidates public ownership in the lower Stoney Creek watershed. The remainder of the watershed is all NFS lands all the way to the Trinity Alps Wilderness, with the exception of one section of private timber company land.

2) Wetlands and Riparian Habitat – The Castle Lake parcel contains numerous high elevation wet meadows as well as streamside and lakeshore riparian vegetation, and Stoney Creek bisects the Stoney Creek Parcel.

- 3) Diverse Habitats for Threatened or Endangered Species –
 - Castle Lake Parcel – Castle Lake parcel is known to contain at least two populations of Region 5 sensitive plant species as well as the geographically isolated Brewer Spruce. Townsend’s Big-eared Bats, Bald Eagles, Osprey, and River Otters occur at Castle Lake. Northern spotted owls occur nearby. Spotted Bat, considered by the State of California Department of Fish and Game to be *one of the rarest mammals in North America* occurs above Castle Lake and on the parcel being considered for acquisition.
 - Stoney Creek Parcel – within Northwest Forest Plan **Late Successional Reserves (LSR)** and contain Nesting/Roosting and Foraging habitat for northern spotted owl.
- 4) Adaptation to the Effects of Climate Change – Both parcels are subject to timber harvest and development while in private ownership. Consolidation of the ecosystems within designated areas allows landscape level management, thus increasing resiliency to climate change in these critical watersheds by preventing habitat fragmentation, and protecting downstream water supplies and systems.
- 5) Conserving Forests for Landscape Restoration and to Mitigate the Effects of Climate Change – Addition of both parcels would allow the Forest Service to manage for old growth habitat in and near designated Wilderness and within tributaries of highly significant watersheds.
 - Castle Lake Parcel – Although not implemented, a timber harvest plan was filed with the State of California and the land remains vulnerable to timber harvest and the resulting road construction, and has a potential for resort or vacation residential development. This acquisition provides old growth forest located on headwaters of important tributaries to the Upper Sacramento River, consolidates ownership, and creates opportunity to preserve crucial environmental components of the most important river system in Northern California.
 - Stoney Creek Parcel – The property has been surveyed for subdivision, utilities nearby, and soil tests conducted for development. Public ownership would prevent subdivision and development and incorporate it into the surrounding LSR management on the shores of Trinity Lake. The Trinity River is the largest tributary to the Klamath River which is the second largest salmon fishery in the Pacific Northwest.
- 6) Recreation Use and Improved Public Access –
 - Castle Lake Parcel - Acquisition of the Castle Lake Parcel **provides legal public access** (currently lacking) to an important trail leading to two alpine lakes, one of which is also on the property, and on to the Castle Crags Wilderness and Pacific Crest Trail, as well as portions of the Castle Lake shoreline and the outlet.
 - Stoney Creek Parcel – Acquisition prevents the pending development directly adjacent to NRA campgrounds and day-use areas; preserves the scenic qualities that draw visitors to these locations, and prevents inevitable conflicts between the private land owners and the public facility visitors.
- 7) Cultural and Heritage Resources – The Castle Lake Parcel is known to contain at least one recorded **prehistoric site** and is presumed to be the location of the 1855 “Battle of Castle Crags”, a significant engagement between white settlers and Native Americans in the area. Acquisition of the parcel *would allow heritage resource surveys to locate and record the battle site.*
- 8) Inside Boundary or Congressionally Designated Areas – Both parcels are within the Shasta-Trinity NF boundary. Additionally:
 - Stoney Creek Parcel – Completely within Congressionally Designated **NRA**.
 - Castle Lake Parcel – More than half the boundary is within Congressionally Designated **Wilderness**, the remainder is primarily surrounded by **inventoried roadless area**.
- 9) Increased Management Efficiency – Acquisition consolidates land ownership on all sides of both parcels, simplifies boundary management, and prevents potential encroachment or trespass originating from adjoining private land. Acquisition enables a more cohesive management of the Shasta-Trinity National Forest National Recreation Area, the Castle Crags Wilderness, and the Castle Lake basin.